

COMMENT ON THE PROPOSAL TO PLACE *HYLOBATES LAR*
(LINNAEUS, 1771) (MAMMALIA: PRIMATES) ON THE OFFICIAL LIST
OF SPECIFIC NAMES IN ZOOLOGY. Z.N.(S.) 1844
(see vol. 34: 75-79)

By L.B. Holthuis (*Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie, Leiden,
Netherlands*)

There is nothing in Linnaeus's original description that makes it necessary to restrict the lectotype to the two (or three) figures cited by Linnaeus. The specimens figured are certainly syntypes, but there must be at least five syntypes in all, since Linnaeus cites five localities. Thus the largest (or the smallest) specimen from Malacca could be made the lectotype, although this, without having seen the specimen or even a figure of it, would be inelegant, even if legal.

Dr Groves's request to the Commission to fix the name *Homo lar* Linnaeus, 1771 to the Malayan white-handed gibbon, with type-locality Malacca, cannot be granted until the concept 'Malayan white-handed gibbon' is fixed by a type specimen. A nominal species must be defined by a type-specimen, not by a vernacular name.

The best solution is for Dr Groves to select a neotype for *Homo lar* so as to conserve existing usage. If he does this within the terms of Article 75 he can attain this part of his objective without the help of the Commission.

Reply by C.P. Groves

I am grateful to Dr Holthuis for having simplified the problem of *Homo lar*. I hereby designate a neotype under the provisions of Article 75 as follows:

- (1) The characters I regard as differentiating the Malayan white-handed gibbon are stated by Groves, 1972, in Rumbaugh (edit.) *Gibbon and Siamang*, vol. 1: 74-75.
- (2) The neotype is British Museum (Natural History) no. 55.1488, adult skin and skull from Bukit Cheraka, Klang, Jeran, Selangor coast (lat. 13° 11' N, long. 101° 19' E). Though small for an adult, this specimen approaches Buffon's plate 3 in having the fur on the upper legs noticeably paler than the medium brown of the general fur.
- (3) So far as I know, there is no question of any of the specimens on which Linnaeus's synonymy is based surviving in any collection.
- (4) The specimen is consistent with Buffon's plate 3. However, since the reference to that figure was queried by Linnaeus, I must respectfully differ from Dr Holthuis and ask for the help of the Commission using its plenary powers to ratify my designation.
- (5) The locality falls within the Malacca of Linnaeus's day (the locality given for the specimen figured in Buffon's plate 3).
- (6) See (2) above.

Dr P.H. Napier has examined the neotype here designated and confirms that it is a suitable specimen.

I therefore wish to replace paragraph 10 (1) (a) of my application by the following:

- (a) to ratify the neotype for *Homo lar* Linnaeus, 1771, designated herein.

CATAPHRACTUS PUNCTATUS BLOCH, 1794 (PISCES).

COMMENT ON PROPOSED INVALIDATION OF NEOTYPE. Z.N.(S.) 1950

By R.V. Melville (*Secretary, International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature*)
(see vol. 32, p. 63)

In a letter dated 15 May 1975, Professor Ernst Mayr criticised this application because (a) it did not show the existence of a confused zoological problem such as would validate the original neotype-designation, and (b) it gave no supporting evidence that the alleged syntypes were really the specimens on which Bloch had based his name – an important point in view of the failure of many eminent scientists to recognize Bloch's specimens in the Berlin collections.

If the first criticism were upheld, then clearly the original neotype-designation by Nijssen & Isbrücker (1967) would be invalid under the Code, and no action by the Commission would be called for. However, that paper, as well as the work by Nijssen, 1970, cited in the application, clearly shows that a confused taxonomic problem did indeed exist, and that progress was impossible until the identity of Bloch's species was settled. If the second criticism were upheld, then the Commission might be in danger of taking a decision on invalid grounds, even if it was called upon to take a decision at all.

I therefore wrote to Dr Nijssen about Professor Mayr's second criticism, and he replied on 5 June 1975 as follows: "In a letter of 10 July 1970 (copy enclosed) Dr Karrer stated that in the registration files of the Berlin Museum two specimens of *Cataphractus punctatus* Bloch were registered as types with the catalogue number 3149. We have no reasons to doubt this. Dr Karrer is recataloguing the collection of Bloch. She undoubtedly knows more about the Berlin collection than anybody else. Since the specimens involved do not contradict the information given by Bloch, there seems no reason to doubt their origin, together with the information given by Dr Karrer. The species is known only from Surinam. No specimens of early date were found in other collections, except for one specimen coll. K. Heller, 1915, identified by F. Steindachner".